

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING

Religious Society of Friends

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Bethesda Friends Meeting December Newsletter for the web

Query for December: Meetings for Business

Are our Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business held in the spirit of worship, seeking the guidance of God? In what ways do we each take our right share of responsibility in the service of the Meeting?

December 2017 Calendar

Meeting for Worship is held at 11:00 a.m. every First Day. The meeting room is also available at 9:30 a.m. for those desiring a smaller, quieter Meeting for Worship, except on the first First day of the month, when Meeting for Business is held at 9:00 a.m. We have a mid-week Meeting for Worship at BFM on Wednesdays, at 7:30 p.m., and a worship group in Boyds the second Sunday of the month at 11:00 a.m.

2	Sat	10:00 a.m.	Christmas Celebration Orchestra Rehearsal, Groome Bldg
3	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Meeting for Business (Child Care is Provided)
		11:00 a.m.	FDS: Worship & Christmas Celebration Rehearsal
		12:15 p.m.	Holiday Book Sale, Literature Table
		12:30 p.m.	Env. Sust. Gp: Fight Climate Change at Home: Green Energy
9	Sat	9:00 a.m.	BFM Service Day: A Wider Circle
		1:30 p.m.	Quaker Book Group in the BFM Library
10	Sun	9:00 a.m.	Ministry & Worship Committee, Groome Building
		9:30 a.m.	ARE: Exploring Quaker Faith & Practice, Music Room
		11:00 a.m.	FDS: Worship & Christmas Celebration Rehearsal
		12:15 p.m.	Holiday Book Sale, Literature Table
		1:00 p.m.	Library Committee, BFM Library
		7:30 p.m.	Experiment with Light
11	Mon	7:30 p.m.	ARE Committee Meeting
13	Wed	7:30 p.m.	Christmas Celebration Orchestra Rehearsal, Groome Building

		8:30 p.m.	January Newsletter Deadline
17	Sun	9:30 a.m.	Committee Day: Adv. & Outreach, Stewardship & Finance
		9:30 a.m.	Christmas Celeb. Orch. Rehearsal, Groome Bldg. Basement
		10:00 a.m.	FDS: Christmas Celebration Dress Rehearsal
		12:00 noon	Christmas Celebration & Holiday Book Sale, Groome Bldg.
20	Wed	8:00 p.m.	Candlelight Meeting for Worship
24	Sun	11:00 a.m.	Meeting for Worship at the SFS Upper School
31	Sun	11:00 a.m.	Meeting for Worship at the SFS Upper School

Details are available on our web site: www.bethesdafriends.org

The Social Concerns Box

A Wider Circle is the recipient for the Social Concerns Box in December. The local non-profit organization assists individuals and families moving out of shelters to more stable living situations. A Wider Circle also offers intensive courses on job skills, financial planning, stress management, nutrition, and parenting. Its mission is to end poverty. Anyone in need of help can find it there. In 2016, A Wider Circle furnished the homes for more than 4,200 families and delivered more than 400 educational programs. They also recycled more than three million pounds of furniture and home goods. More than 15,000 volunteers came to serve at A Wider Circle in 2016, including members of BFM twice that year. For details: www.awidercircle.org

On a Sunday, October 15, 20 children and BFM adults walked through the Edgemoor community to raise funds for **Interfaith Works**, which helps families leave shelters for pleasant apartments and offers support over a two-year period, enabling them to become self-sufficient. The walkathon raised \$320 that will be added to the \$1,025 from the October social concerns box on the credenza and the \$1,000 allocated in the BFM budget for a **total of \$2,345**. The total will be matched by the Cafritz Fund. Contributions to the Mary Jane Simpson Scholarship Fund are now up to \$10,176.

Religious Education for Children

Children of all ages are welcome and encouraged to join their families in Meeting for Worship from 11:00 to 11:15 a.m..

The program for December is as follows:

Dec. 3: Christmas Play Rehearsal; class for those not in the play.

Dec. 10: Christmas Play Rehearsal; class for those not in the play.

Dec. 17: Christmas Celebration. Those in the pageant should come for dress rehearsal at 10:00 a.m. There will be class for those not in the play, beginning at 11:15 a.m.

Dec. 24 & 31: Because the Sidwell Friends Lower School campus will be closed, there will be no program or child care.

Events

2nd/13th/17th: Christmas Orchestra Rehearsal

Orchestra rehearsals are:

- Saturday, December 2, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. (Groome Building multipurpose room).
- Wednesday, December 13, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. (Groome Building multipurpose room).
- Sunday, December 17, from 9:30 a.m. (Groome Building basement); then 11:00 a.m. "dress rehearsal" (Groome Building multipurpose room); noon performance.

3rd: Meeting for Business

On Sunday, December 3 at 9:00 a.m. Bethesda Friends Meeting will consider various business items. How the Spirit will lead us in discernment of issues both large and small is part of the mystery that is the Religious Society of Friends. On the agenda for Meeting for Business this month are reports from Nominating (final), Advancement & Outreach, and Fellowship & Hospitality. All who come to Meeting for Worship are welcome and encouraged to participate in our worship. Childcare to age 12 is provided. Please join us if you can.

3rd/10th/17th: Holiday Book Sale

The BFM book table staff will hold a special holiday sale in the meeting library at the rise of the 11:00 a.m. meeting for worship on Sunday, December 3 and 10, and at the Christmas Celebration on Sunday, December 17. We will offer a variety of specially selected new titles for both children and adults that we hope will delight the eye and engage the imagination. Please stop by the table if you can. You may find a holiday gift for a friend, a family member, or even yourself.

Palestinian olive oil will also be on sale in the Meetinghouse on the same days. A bottle of olive oil makes a great gift and supports Palestinian farmers.

3rd: Workshop on Home Energy Efficiency

Want to help save the planet and save money at the same time? BFM's Environmental Sustainability Group will host a workshop on home energy efficiency, including simple steps you can take to reduce energy costs and your "carbon footprint" and help you stay warm this winter! We'll also discuss utility-subsidized energy audits, solar power options, and how to source your electricity supply with wind power. Please join us Sunday, December 3, 12:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room.

6th/13th/20th/27th: Mid-week Meetings for Worship

On Wednesday evenings, at 7:30 p.m., there is a mid-week Meeting for Worship. All are welcome! This is an opportunity for some to come for whom Sundays are just too busy. Others may appreciate the additional time for communal worship. Please come when the Spirit moves you. Child care is not available. Please note that the meeting on Wednesday, December 20, will begin at 8:00, not 7:30 p.m., and will be the very special Candlelight Meeting for Worship (see under the 20th, below).

9th: BFM Service Day: A Wider Circle

On Saturday, December 9, please join BFM's Peace & Social Justice Committee in our fifth annual volunteer day as part of A Wider Circle's Holiday Giving Program, called Hope for the Holidays. A Wider Circle (AWC) is a non-profit organization that assists individuals and families transitioning out of shelters to more stable living situations by providing "basic need items" such as furniture. During the month of December, AWC seeks to make the holidays a time of joy for these families by providing new holiday gifts to them.

Please join us to help assist clients in selecting new holiday gifts in the section of AWC's warehouse that is transformed into "The North Pole" for the month of December. We will then help wrap these gifts. Individuals and families are welcome! Students are especially welcome to help and can get SSL (student service learning) hours for volunteering here. We are planning to volunteer from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. A Wider Circle is at 9159-C Brookville Road, about half way between Silver Spring and Bethesda, near Grubb Road and East-West Highway. See www.awidercircle.org for details about the organization. This is a great opportunity to get to know others at BFM while helping out a great cause!

If you are unable to join us but would like to contribute, please consider donating money to the December Social Concerns Box. Or you can take new toys and other items to AWC's North Pole (the earlier in the month, the better). Needed items (new) for the Holiday Program are games, books,

dolls; hats, gloves, and scarves; body lotion, soaps; and gift cards. You can learn more at <http://awidercircle.org/holidays/>

9th: Quaker Book Group Meeting

The Quaker Book Group has been meeting monthly, normally on the second Saturday at 3:00 p.m. at Bethesda Public Library (not at Meeting). Because the library is undergoing renovations, the meeting place is in the BFM Library from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. Newcomers are always welcome (even if you have not read the book!). Since the time and date can change on short notice, please join the Book Group List Serve. By joining the list serve, you can participate in the online discussions, read the post-meeting summary, and help choose the next book. For details: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/bfm-book-group>

10th: Exploring Quaker Faith & Practice

Are you a newcomer to Bethesda Friends Meeting? Or perhaps you've been with us a while, but have some questions about Quaker faith and practice. Or you may be a long-time Friend, wishing to refresh and deepen your understanding of Quakerism, and share your thoughts with other seekers. The Adult Religious Education Committee has been offering a 6-week session, called "Exploring Quaker Faith and Practice." The last session will be held on Sunday, December 10, at 9:30 a.m. in the Music Room of the SAM Building, across the patio from the Meetinghouse, in the basement. The topic will be Quaker Process and Decision-Making/Meeting for Business. For those interested, we suggest buying or borrowing the book, *Letters to a Fellow Seeker*, by Steve Chase. For details, see: http://www.bethesdafriends.org/child_care_religious_education.aspx#ARE

10th: Experiment With Light Session

How do we quiet our brains enough to hear the still, small voice within us? How might we deepen our experience of meeting for worship? Experiment With Light is a meditative and centering practice based upon Rex Ambler's book *Light to Live By*, which describes early Quaker meditative habits and translates them into a highly accessible process of clearness and understanding. All are welcome to attend. First-time participants find the process quite easy to follow and, often, richly rewarding.

This is an invitation to a session on Sunday evening, December 10, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

17th: BFM's Christmas Celebration

This year's Christmas Celebration, which is a continuation of Meeting for Worship, will be held on Sunday, December 17 at approximately 12:00 noon. At the appropriate time, F(f)riends will be led from the Meeting room into the Groome Building. Young Friends have created a new celebration of the birth of Jesus. The story is about Jesus at age 13, about to turn 14. He asks for a special gift to see into the future so that he can feel hopeful about the good work of people. He is led to meet Harriet Tubman (freedom and underground railroad with Quaker identification), then Albert Einstein (refugee, brilliant accomplishments to help humanity). Then after requesting to see hope in his own land, he is brought to Ramallah Friends School in Palestine. Our orchestra will accompany carols and play festive music. All are welcome. Because there will be an unusually large number of people coming, your contributions of refreshments and goodies will be greatly appreciated.

20th: Candlelight Meeting for Worship

Please mark your calendars for our annual Candlelight Meeting for Worship at 8:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 20. For more than 25 years, Friends have come to appreciate, in the midst of non-

stop holiday activity and anxiety, this peaceful hour together. From infants to teens, oldsters and youngsters, all are most welcome. On the hall table, there are postcards about the event so you can invite friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join us. This is a refreshing way to celebrate the season, so please join us.

24th & 31st: Holiday Meetings for Worship

Because the Sidwell Friends Lower School campus will be closed on December 24 and 31 this year, we will be holding meetings for worship at 11:00 a.m. in the Smith Meeting Room on the Upper School campus, 3825 Wisconsin Avenue, NW. There will be no child care or First Day School program on those Sundays.

Into the Future

Planning Ahead

For those who are already planning for the new year, Meetings for Business in the first half of 2018 will be: January 7, February 4, March 4, April 8, May 6, and June 3. Coordinating gatherings will usually be at the rise of Meeting on the Sundays before Meeting for Business, (January 28, February 25, March 25, April 29, and May 27).

Committee meeting times are determined by what suits most members of the committee, and a regular time for meeting can be determined at the first meeting of the committee. Although meeting times may change, at this point Pastoral Care and Ministry & Worship meet 9:00 a.m. on the third Sunday; Advancement & Outreach, Religious Education, and Stewardship & Finance all meet at 9:30 a.m. on that day; Adult Religious Education meets on the second Monday after Meeting for Business, in the evening, off campus; and Peace & Social Justice meets the fourth Sunday at 9:15 a.m.

At this time of transition of committee membership, it is very important for committee clerks to reach out to newly nominated members and invite them to the next committee meeting. It is also very important to designate the new clerks for each committee on or before January 13, so that this information can be included in the new directory and the February newsletter. For those uncertain about taking on the responsibility of being a clerk, fear not! We have a BFM resource guide for clerks that will answer all your questions, as well as past clerks who will be happy to give guidance to you when you may need it. It is on pages 47 to 52 of the 2017 directory. An updated version will be sent all new committee clerks. There are funds available for scholarships to Pendle Hill, which often offers excellent workshops on clerking and Quaker leadership.

January 26th to 28th: BYM Women's Retreat

The 2018 Baltimore Yearly Meeting Women's Retreat will be held the weekend of January 26 through January 28 for the third year at the Pearlstone Conference Center in Reisterstown MD. The theme is Leaning into our Light on Gender, Race, and Sexuality. [Registration is now open](#) on the Baltimore Yearly Meeting website. Registration ends January 5.

Committee Notes

Fellowship & Hospitality

We thank Fellowship & Hospitality for providing refreshments at the rise of Meeting in December. The committee oversees hospitality after Meetings for Worship and potlucks, although direct responsibility rotates among all committees. F&H provides hospitality for special occasions, such as memorial meetings.

Ministry & Worship

What Do We Do When It Snows? In general, there will be Meeting for Worship if the Sidwell Friends Lower School is open. To find out, check: www.sidwell.edu If the meetinghouse is open, whoever comes will hold Meeting for Worship. Those without computers can call someone else who does have one, or the school security office: 202-537-8197.

Nominating

The proposed roster of officers and committee members, effective January 1, 2018, is given below. The proposed roster will be presented for approval at Meeting for Business on Sunday, December 3.

Current committee clerks are encouraged to welcome new members and inform them of the time and place of the first committee meeting of 2018. At that meeting, the agenda should include orientation of new members and selection of the clerk (or co-clerks) for the year. Please submit the names of the new clerks no later than mid-January. For information on choosing a clerk and other committee functions, please see the Community Resource Guide beginning on page 47 of the 2017 Directory.

Stewardship & Finance

End of Year Giving. In this season of sharing and giving thanks, let us all remember Bethesda Friends Meeting with our tax deductible contributions. Our community and work depend on our combined financial support. You can slip your check in the collection box outside the meeting room or mail it to our assistant treasurer. If you prefer online credit card transactions, go to our website at: www.bethesdafriends.org Or consider setting up automatic transfers from your bank or as payroll deductions. Automatic contributions offer some advantages, including convenience for the giver and a degree of income predictability for the Meeting.

Meeting Notes

Please Support the BYM Camping Program

Baltimore Yearly Meeting, of which Bethesda Friends Meeting is one of 52 Meetings, is asking that Friends support the Yearly Meeting's camping program as they consider their year-end giving. The cost of sending one young person to camp for a week is \$925. A gift can be made for this amount on the YM's website at www.bym-rsf.org/giving/give-to-bym-camps.html. Monthly auto-give donations for camper or other BYM programs also can be made through the website. The Camping Program brought 574 youth to its four camps this past summer. The program has worked intensively over the last several years to create a diverse and inclusive experience for campers. This year, 26% of camper were youth of color as were 19% of staff. While 36% of campers were Quakers, others were Buddhists, other Christians, Jews, Muslims, and atheists. BFM helped promote this year's diversity by underwriting the tuition of two Syrian youth from refugee families being sponsored by Langley Hill Friends Meeting. All the monthly meetings helped 58 campers attend by contributing a total of \$46,983.

Quaker Motto Calendars

Quaker Motto Calendars will soon be available on our hall table. They have been produced by the Scattergood family (now Marion Scattergood Ballard of BFM) since 1884. Please take one and enjoy it. About 30,000 are distributed each year. Marion encourages you to order calendars for your friends and family.

Thinking About Race

Sometimes Quakers tend to rest on the laurels of early Quaker leaders, such as William Penn, who sought peaceful relationships with the Lenni Lenape people. At the end of the 18th century, Friends were alarmed by continued public detestation of and violence toward Native Americans and feared they would be exterminated as a people. The Quakers' desire for just and humane treatment of the First Americans brought together a collection of Friends who would systematically focus on this matter. The Indian Affairs Committee, a standing committee established in 1795, is Baltimore Yearly Meeting's oldest, continuously operating committee working on a social concern and specifically addressing the concerns of people of color. It was one of the first two committees to which women were appointed. Since then, Friends from BYM have interacted in various ways, both in-depth and informal, with citizens of the Shawnee, Wyandotte, Miami, Delaware, Iroquois, Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Tuscarora, Santee Sioux, Winnebago, Omaha, Nennah, Otoe, Pamunkey, Mattaponi, Lumbee, Navajo, Piscataway, and Rappahannock Native Nations. In early times, relationships were closest with Shawnee, Seneca, and Iroquois people, more recently with Navajo, Lumbee, and Piscataway people. (Some of these tribes now use their own, non-western names; for example, the Iroquois are actually the Haudenosaunee.)

Peace Notes

As Baltimore Yearly Meeting wrestles with how to articulate our commitment to racial justice, it may be useful for us to turn to the words and model of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. An incredible resource is The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (see www.thekingcenter.org) Established in 1968 by Coretta Scott King, the center works to implement "the philosophy and methods of nonviolence to create the Beloved Community that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. envisioned." In the past year, many have found their resources "Six Principles Of Nonviolence" and "Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change" to be relevant to struggles for justice today. Additionally, Dr. King's Letter from Birmingham City Jail has been frequently referenced in recent months; that and other primary source documents are all available on the website. In the words of William Penn, "Let us then try what love can do."